



PROPERTY OWNERS IN LAND USE MAY SEE CHANGES IN TAX BILLS

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Montgomery County, Virginia – Property owners with acreage enrolled in the County's land use assessment program may see changes in their property bills when taxes are due June 5.

County Land Use and GIS administrators have been updating soil acreages based upon revised classifications provided to them from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services. This is the first GIS digitally defined soil classification audit undertaken by the County. The review of the eight soil classifications is being applied to each parcel under the land use program. The results of this soil classification audit may show a change in soil classes on a particular parcel that may increase or decrease the ultimate value assessed under the land use program.

The land use program provides for the deferral of real estate taxes on real estate that qualifies for agricultural, horticultural and forestry uses. Land values under the program are based on soil classes and are less than those estimated at fair market value. The highest quality soil is valued at \$840 an acre, while the lowest quality is valued at \$50 per acre. The land values per acre, which have also been revised, represent an increase in values over FY11 but are still lower than in nearby localities.

Approximately 1,400 parcels or 93,460 total acres are in land use. This represents 38 percent of the 243,441 acres in the County. The purpose of the program is to further the public interest by encouraging the preservation of land, to conserve and protect the County's natural resources and to promote orderly land use planning and development.

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